

## SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SIX POINT TURF PROGRAM

**This program may be followed to the letter to create a smooth, green appearance or you may simply mow when needed, leaving the clippings in place; avoid watering in hot, dry months to conserve water; neglect to aerate and remove thatch; ignore a few weeds and just remove fall leaves and winter debris.**

### **November – March:**

- Sharpen mower blades.
- Think alternatives to planting/ maintaining turf, especially those hilly or shaded areas where erosion begins and weeds dominate.

### **March – April:**

- Clear winter debris from lawn.
- Mow 2 inches for first mowing in early spring.
- Do soil test<sup>1</sup>, once every three years is sufficient.

### **May – June:**

- Set mower at height at **3+ inches** and mow **little and often** .
- Aerate<sup>2</sup>, only if you have heavy soils, high use areas or where the thatch is over one inch thick.
- Top-dress new and immature lawns if needed (less than 10 years old).
- Over-seed thin and bare patches from May 15 – June 15. Rate: 7 seeds per sq. inch.
- Apply Hb nematodes for white grub control. Source and information at: [www.greenmethods.com](http://www.greenmethods.com)

### **Late June – Early August:**

- Leave grass clippings in place. Best time is in early evening after the heat of the day.
- If over seeding during this period, use fast growing fine blade ryegrass, keep moist for first three weeks, and mow 2 inches high for the first 3 cuts.
- Apply compost tea to any newly seeded area.
- Water 1- 1.5 inches per week, including rainfall to promote deeper roots to combat and crowd out weeds. Imbed a plastic cup to determine amount of rainfall. Water, **infrequently and deeply** is the key. The best time is 6 – 10 a.m.
- If dry conditions prevail, save on water by provoking a **premature dormant state** for your lawn. The grass will turn brown but green right up after the first rain. No foot traffic is recommended during dormancy.

### **Additional Maintenance Situations**

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<sup>1</sup> For kit, directions and analysis, apply to: [www.cumberlandswcd.org](http://www.cumberlandswcd.org) or Maine Soil Testing Lab: (207) 581- 3591

- **Wildflower meadows** can be sustained by mowing twice a year. Ideally, **July** after your preferred species has seeded (e.g. lupines) and at the end of the growing season before a freeze. Rejuvenating some wildflowers with seeds may be necessary to maintain the mix, since some species tend to take over.
- **Hay Fields** are best mowed in **June** when growth is vigorous, and before wilting takes place, for maximum nutritional value. Mow later in the season for a second crop and only when dry.

### **August 15 – September 15:**

- Continue to mow **3 inches** or higher, being flexible with mowing schedule.
- Leave grass clippings in place, cutting when dry.

The following steps must be implemented in the same sequence as listed if you decide to do the fall lawn preparations for the next growing season.

- **Aerate**<sup>2</sup> if the top four inches of soil is compacted. Rent a Core Aerator once a year for moderate-use lawns. Leave the ‘cores’ in place to decompose
- **Top-dress** by raking in a **½ inch** of composted organic matter, especially after aerating. Dump wheelbarrow loads 3- 4 feet apart, and spread with a metal rake in dry weather.
- **Over-seed** (on top of existing grass) to rejuvenate bare patches and thin spots. Though over seeding can be done any part of the growing season, this is the best time (less weed competition and higher soil temperatures for quick germination.) Next best time is May (more weed competition.) Recommended rate is half the listed normal seeding rate. Process involves: Sow, thinly top-dress, firm the soil, dampen and cover with weed free hay, Seed with low maintenance mixes available at: [www.allensterlinglothrup.com](http://www.allensterlinglothrup.com) .
- **Fertilize** with organic nitrogen such as **Pro-Booster (10- 0- 0)** available at: [www.norganics.com](http://www.norganics.com) & [www.dirtworks.net](http://www.dirtworks.net) , if indicated. This is the best time to induce root growth without promoting weeds.

### **October - November:**

- Final mow at **2 inches** high to deter snow mold.
- Rake fallen leaves and dead grass debris. Compost material for future application back to the soil.
- Apply **compost tea** to boost newly seeded areas. Fall applications boost **root** growth. *Refer to Six Step Best Garden Practices, pg. 2 for directions.*

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<sup>2</sup> Benefits: Loosens soil, releases nutrients and adds water/air pockets; improves root growth and thickens the turf; reduces thatch and run-off; and improves clay soils. Especially effective in the fall.

